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Message Text

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R 092201Z OCT 74
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 222927

FOL REPEAT STOCKHOLM 04410 SENT ACTION SECSTATE
INFO BONN BRUSSELS COPENHAGEN THE HAGUE
HELSINKI OSLO PARIS REYKJAVIK NATO
USCINCEUR OCT 02

QTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STOCKHOLM 4410

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: MASS, MARR, SW
SUBJECT: F-104 REPLACEMENT

REF: THE HAGUE 4822

1. DESPITE CLEAR INDICATION THAT VIGGEN REMAINS WEAKEST CONTENDER BY FAR IN COMPETITION FOR REPLACEMENT STARFIGHTER, WITH ARRIVAL HERE TODAY OF DEFMINS OF NORWAY, DENMARK, HOLLAND, AND BELGIUM, SWEDISH OFFICIALS AND BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES CONTINUE TO EXPRESS HOPE THAT VIGGEN MAY ULTIMATELY BE CHOSEN. STATEMENT BY DUTCH INDUSTRIAL UNIONS THAT VIGGEN SHOULD BE SELECTED ON BASIS IT "MORE EUROPEAN" AND INVOLVES MORE "SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS" OFFSET PACKAGE (REFTEL) HAS UNDOUBTEDLY STIMULATED HOPES HERE THAT SOMEHOW VIGGEN WILL EDGE OUT US AND FRENCH COMPETITORS.

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2. IN THIS CONNECTION, SENIOR REPRESENTATIVE HERE OF

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HONEYWELL SYSTEMS (WHICH PROVIDES CERTAIN INTEGRAL PARTS OF VIGGEN SYSTEM) ADVISED EMBASSY OFFICER OCTOBER 1 THAT HONEYWELL IS "UNDER PRESSURE" TO PROVIDE ATTRACTIVE OFFSET PACKAGE SUCH AS PRODUCTION OF SOME PART OF HONEYWELL SYSTEM IN HOLLAND WHICH COULD BE INTEGRATED WITH VIGGEN. SAME SOURCE SAID THAT HE WAS MADE TO UNDERSTAND THAT IF OFFSETS WERE "ATTRACTIVE ENOUGHT," THIS WOULD CERTAINLY BE IMPORTANT FACTOR IN DUTCH DECISION ON WHICH AIRCRAFT TO PURCHASE.

3. HOWEVER, LONG-TIME HUGHES AIRCRAFT COMPANY REPRESENTATIVE IN SCANDINAVIA, WHO IS WELL ACQUAINTED WITH NORDIC MILITARY LEADERSHIP, INFORMED DEFENSE ATTACHES SAME DAY THAT IN HIS VIEW, VIGGEN DOES NOT STAND CHANCE TO REPLACE F-104. HE SAID THAT HE WAS CONVINCED THAT NORWAY, DENMARK, AND NETHERLANDS WILL OPT FOR ONE OF US AIRCRAFT, WHILE BELGIUM APPEARS TO BE STILL "ON FENCE". HOWEVER, HE ADDED HIS OPINION THAT IN VIEW OF FRENCH VACILLATION ON NUMBER OF MIRAGES FRANCE ITSELF WOULD PURCHASE, BELGIUM COULD PROBABLY EVENTUALLY GO ALONG WITH OTHER THREE PURCHASERS IN SELECTING US AIRCRAFT.

4. COMMENT: WHILE SWEDISH OFFICIALS CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN OPTIMISTIC FRONT ON LIKELIHOOD VIGGEN WILL BE CHOSEN AS STARFIGHTER REPLACEMENT, THEY ARE AWARE THAT THEIR CHANCES OF SECURING THIS CONTRACT ARE SLIM INDEED. THE FACT THAT SWEDEN, WITH ITS SMALL SIZE IN COMPARISON TO US AND FRANCE, IS STILL IN RUNNING, IS COMPLIMENT TO EXCELLENCE OF SWEDISH INDUSTRY AND TO QUALITY OF VIGGEN AIRCRAFT. ONE FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL COMMENTED THAT PRESTIGE BENEFIT TO SWEDISH AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY FROM SIMPLY BEING IN COMPETITION WITH US AND FRANCE ON STARFIGHTER REPLACEMENT MADE EFFORT WORTHWHILE.
STRAUSZ-HUPE

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